

**Statement of Ranking Member Tom Davis  
On Committee Oversight Plan  
February 14, 2007**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And congratulations on assembling this oversight plan. We appreciate the opportunity to consult with you about the plan and note that you have included our suggestions as well.

Congressional oversight plays a critical role in our system of government. The Supreme Court has recognized that Congress's exercise of its investigative powers is most appropriate and legitimate when used in support of its legislative function. In other words, I know you agree this Committee should use its powers to solve the problems facing our country, not just to embarrass people or to say "gotcha."

I hope our hearings moving forward will be constructive and transparent. I hope that our oversight will focus on what it is purported to focus on – that hearings on protecting taxpayer dollars, for example, will indeed be focused on taxpayer dollars.

It is also not enough for Congress simply to delegate authority to executive branch agencies and rely on those agencies to implement Congress's intentions without a measure of oversight. Even when Congress delegates authority to an agency, that agency must exercise its authority according to standards that Congress established under the statute. This Committee should remain vigilant that executive branch agencies are doing what Congress intended.

Finally, Congress has enacted a number of important statutory requirements for the management of agencies. These include the Government Performance and Results Act, the Chief Financial

Officers Act, the Federal Information Security Management Act, and many others.

These laws give agencies the tools to carry out their missions. GPRA, for example, makes sure that agencies measure outcomes of their programs -- whether an adult literacy program is actually teaching adults to read; whether a child nutrition program is actually feeding children. The CFO Act is intended to promote sound financial management by requiring that agencies have qualified personnel to manage the taxpayers' dollars. FISMA is designed to keep government IT systems secure.

Most of these laws are squarely within the jurisdiction of this committee, and indeed were written in this Committee. These laws express Congress's commitment to efficient and effective government. I hope the committee will make sure these laws are working properly and reinforce our commitment to the American people to use their dollars wisely.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to take the opportunity to mention two timely oversight matters:

- I am today releasing a Report from the Government Accountability Office on District of Columbia Procurement. I requested this report as Chairman of the Government Reform Committee last year.

This is a scathing Report that should serve as a wake-up call to all involved in procurement issues in the District of Columbia. The reform that is needed is substantial and statutory. The Report makes clear that District of Columbia procurement is fatally flawed both in its structure and execution, affecting all aspects of governance.

The GAO is advising us that procurement in the District of Columbia lacks “transparency, accountability and competition” and that in its present form it “increases the risk of preferential treatment for certain vendors and ultimately drives up costs.” Current practices clearly do not reflect sound management and oversight.

Current procurement practices are totally unacceptable.

I look forward to the District’s plan to address the critical areas touched upon. I will continue to work with the city and all stakeholders to make the fundamental changes required.

- I also have a letter asking that you join us in seeking the whole story about Sandy Berger’s theft of documents from the Archives. We have learned the Justice Department did not seriously address Sandy Berger’s first two visits to the Archives when he had access to original documents. We also now know that no one told the 9/11 Commission that Berger had access to original documents he could have taken without detection. Staff of the 9/11 Commission have said this revelation caused “grave concern.” Our letter asks that you join the investigation and call Sandy Berger to appear before the Committee on this matter.